
Licaria caribaea (Lauraceae): A New Species from the Caribbean Lowlands of Costa Rica

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ABSTRACT. A new *Licaria* (Lauraceae) from the Caribbean lowlands of Costa Rica is described and illustrated here.

RESUMEN. Una *Licaria* (Lauraceae) de las tierras bajas del Caribe costarricense se describe y se ilustra en este artículo.

Licaria Aublet (Lauraceae) is a Neotropical genus of trees represented in Costa Rica by at least eight species, some of them very poorly understood (Burger & van der Werff, 1990). It is well characterized by its androecium of three stamens with two thecae each and the deeply cupulate fruiting receptacle with two usually distinct margins on its rim. An additional species from the Caribbean lowlands is described below.

Licaria caribaea Gómez-Laurito & Cascante, sp. nov. **TYPE:** Costa Rica. Limón: Límite norte del Parque Nacional Tortuguero, Caño Suerte, 9°36'42"N, 83°45'00"W, 0–10 m, 2 set. 1995 (fl, fr), A. Cascante & A. Ruíz 705 (holotype, CR; isotypes, F, MO, USJ). Figure 1.

Species inflorescentia paniculata usque 32 cm longa, multiflora; stamina 2-locellata, locellis extrorsis, apicalibus; cupula late conica, usque 42 mm longa, longitudinaliter cristata a congeneribus diversa.

Trees 12–15 m tall, 20–30 cm DBH; bark lenticellate; inner bark yellowish, hard; leafy branchlets minutely puberulous, grayish, solid, terete. Leaves alternate; petioles 10–20 mm long, sulcate above, glabrous; leaf blades 18–24 cm long, 8–11 cm broad, ovate-elliptic, tapering to an acuminate apex, obtuse at the base, drying chartaceous and brownish green, glabrous on both surfaces, with 8–10 major secondary veins on each side, margin entire. Inflorescences paniculate, axillary and extra-axillary to distal leaves, 13–18(–32) cm long, 14–16 cm wide, many-flowered, minutely puberulous, peduncles 5–12 cm long, 1.5–2 mm thick with al-

ternating lateral branches, tertiary branches 6–20 mm long, crowded by 6–9 flowers on pedicels 2–4 mm long. Flowers yellow, drying dark, 2–2.2 mm long, 6 tepals, externally very short puberulous, internally villous with whitish hairs; 3 fertile stamens, 1 mm long, strongly connivent forming a thick column, filaments not differentiated, anthers ovoid with 2 apical thecae and the small (0.25 mm) valves with extrorse dehiscence near the apex of the stamen; staminodes and glands minute, 0.3–0.5 mm long, tightly pressed together and appearing fused; ovary narrowly ovate, glabrous, pistil 1 mm long, glabrous, style slender, simple, slightly exerted between the fertile stamens. Fruits borne on a broadly conical receptacle 31–42 mm long, 15–30 mm broad at the top, ca. 18 mm deep, longitudinally ridged, with two distinct margins on its rim, lenticellate, green turning red; fruiting pedicels 5–20 mm long, 3–4 mm diam.; berry narrowly ovoid to ellipsoid, 20–25 mm long, 10 mm diam., red to purple at maturity.

Licaria caribaea is currently known only from the Caribbean coastal plain of Costa Rica (hence its name), from 0 to 10 m elevation. It is found in the very wet forest commonly called “yolillales,” “Tropical, tropical, very wet with no dry months” biotic unit according to Herrera and Gómez (1993). This new species is associated with *Raphia taedigera* Martius (Arecaceae), *Carapa guianensis* Aublet (Meliaceae), and the legumes *Pentaclethra macroloba* (Willdenow) Kuntze, *Prioria copaifera* Grisebach, and *Crudia acuminata* Benthham, among others. According to Kurz (1982), this new taxon belongs to his subgenus *Guianensis* (which he should have named subg. *Licaria*, because the type of the genus is included in the subgenus, according to van der Werff, in litt., 1996) and keys to *L. excelsa* Kostermans. Kurz’s description of *L. excelsa* is rather broad; however, the two species can be readily separated by the following key:

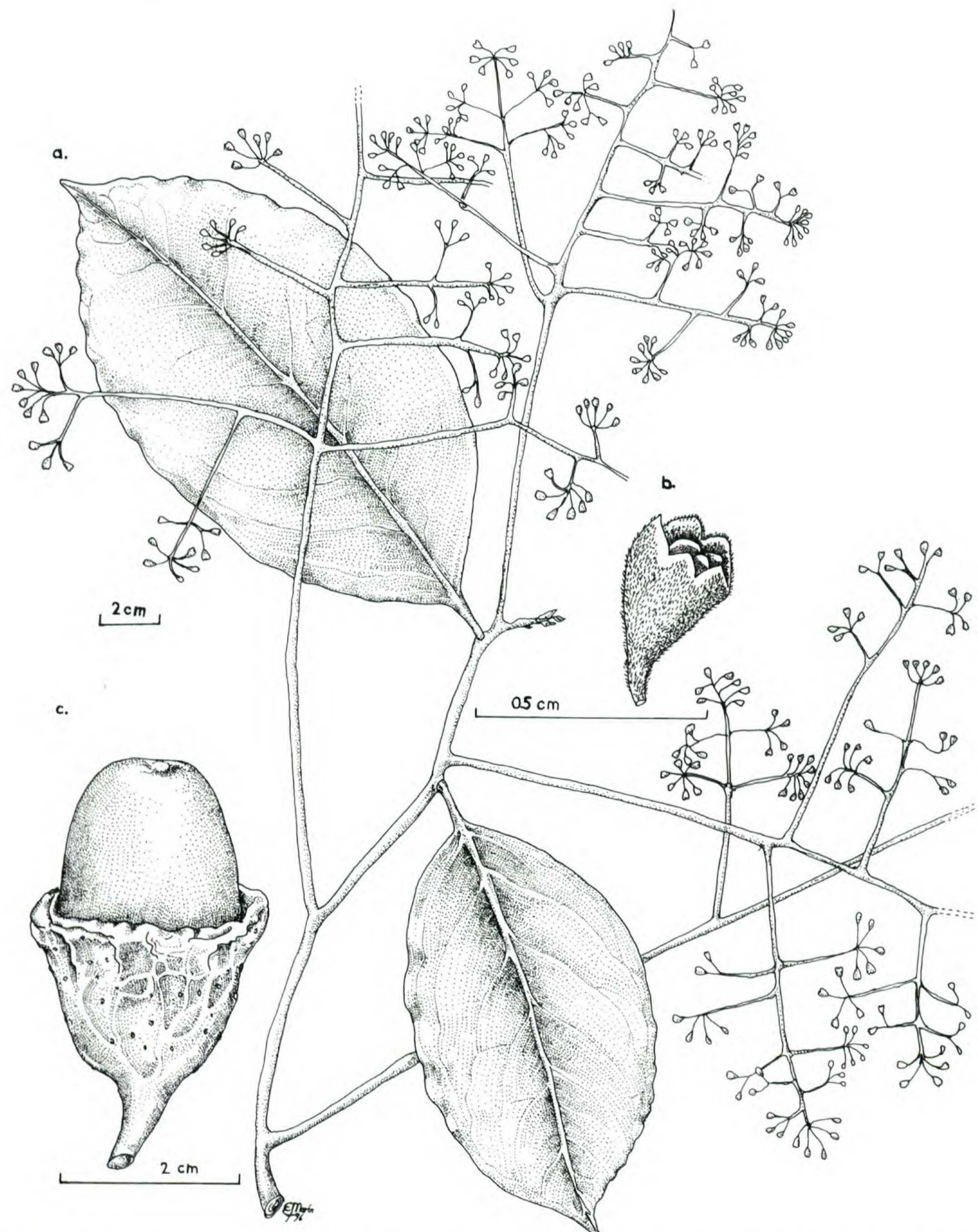


Figure 1. *Licaria caribaea* Gómez-Laurito & Cascante (A. Cascante & A. Ruiz 705). —a. Flowering branch. —b. Flower. —c. Fruit.

- 1a. Trees of medium- to high-altitude habitat, (600–) 1100–2300 m; leaves drying dark in color; inflorescences 5–20 cm long; fruits borne in a cupulate or hemispherical receptacle 13–20 mm long, 18–12 mm broad, not ridged *L. excelsa*
- 1b. Trees of low-altitude habitat, 0–10 m; leaves drying brownish green in color; inflorescences 13–32 cm long, many-flowered; fruits borne in a

broadly conical receptacle 31–42 mm long, 15–30 mm broad, longitudinally ridged . . . *L. caribaea*

Paratypes. COSTA RICA. **Limón:** same locality as type, 3 Mar. 1996 (ster.), A. Cascante & P. Opay 987 (CR, USJ), 3 Mar. 1996 (ster.), A. Cascante & P. Opay 986 (CR, USJ), 3 Mar. 1996 (fr), A. Cascante & P. Opay 985 (CR, USJ).

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